



Emotions are your reactions to the world around you



We can think of emotions as pieces of information



We all feel different emotions at different times



Both comfortable and uncomfortable emotions are important to pay attention to

WHAT do emotions have to do with small changes?

Emotional and psychological health work alongside things in our environment to **impact our overall heart health!**

There is also a connection between what we think, how we feel, and what we do. **So our emotions affect our eating and activity behaviors.**

Sometimes emotions can affect our behavior in a way that makes it *easier* to reach our goals, while other times they can get us off track.



HOW can I recognize my emotions?

It can be very difficult to accurately identify how you are feeling, but becoming aware of your emotions can provide an opportunity to put space between your feelings and actions to make decisions that work best for YOU!



Bring awareness to the emotional experience

Ask yourself: What sensations am I feeling in my body? Where in my body is that experience? What thoughts may indicate how I am feeling?



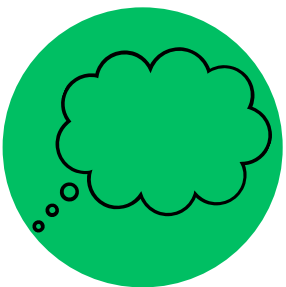
Name the Emotion

- Choose an accurate name for the emotion
- It is possible for you to experience more than one emotion--and sometimes they may be conflicting



Understand what sparked the emotion

While some emotions are activated by a single event, others may be the result of several experiences built-up over time



Consider your reaction

- Even if the emotion is uncomfortable: How can it be helpful? What is the emotion telling you? What can you learn from it?
- Suppressing an emotion can make it stronger and impact our behavior in unhelpful ways



Choose how to proceed

Decide how to use or manage/cope with the emotional experience

HOW can I navigate my emotions while making small changes?

Mindfulness

To be mindful means that we have **focused attention + an accepting attitude**

An accepting attitude helps us to acknowledge our experience without judgment, which frees up our mind to develop solutions or coping strategies.

It can also help us tune into our bodies to distinguish between physical and emotional hunger

If you identify that your hunger is stemming from an emotional need, try to find another way to “feed” this hunger.

For example:

- If sad or lonely, try to connect with others
- If bored, try to find a mentally stimulating activity

Physical Hunger

Tends to be gradual and can be postponed

Can be satisfied with any number of foods

Once full, you're likely to stop eating

Not typically associated with feelings of guilt

Emotional Hunger

Feels sudden and urgent

Causes very specific cravings

You tend to eat more than you normally would

Can cause feelings of guilt afterwards



Mindfulness can also help us surf the wave of emotions and cravings.

You may have experienced that as cravings continue, their intensity builds—but this doesn't last forever! If you do nothing in response to a craving, it eventually crashes and subsides, just like a wave. Cravings can feel like they demand action, but this is not the case. Try to surf the urge wave by doing nothing as the craving ebbs and flows. See what happens!

Talk Back to Thoughts

UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS MAY SOUND LIKE



HOW TO TALK BACK TO UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS



Examine the FACTS

Is there evidence to support for your thoughts?

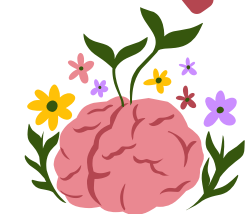
Restructure your thoughts

Bring in some objectivity and self-compassion by considering how you would respond to a friend that was thinking or talking to themselves this way

Consider what you would say to a friend

How can you alter your thinking to be helpful?

For example: "I shouldn't be eating french fries" vs. "I am choosing not to eat french fries today because it's not aligned with my goals."



Promote positive emotional and mental health



Practice gratitude by journaling

Seek out activities that play to your strengths



Try self-affirmations and positive self-talk

Practice self-compassion when you experience slip-ups



Set yourself up for **SUCCESS**



Try to pay attention to patterns, moods, and situations to figure out what activates your eating, sedentary behavior, and stress

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·Develop a plan for when you experience emotion-related cravings, which may also include *choosing* the foods you're craving! It's about making mindful and intentional choices that are aligned with your values and goals.

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·Then, select one specific action or goal that you can commit to

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·Remember that no emotion sticks around forever. When you experience an uncomfortable emotion, try to sit with it, accept it, and recognize that it will pass.

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·Practice self-compassion and speak kindly to yourself, just as you would a friend!